

St. Paul's Church

of the United Church of Christ



"The Light" Newsletter
December 2017/January 2018 Edition



From the Interim

Prayer in the Days Before Advent

My brother, Jesus. It happens every year. I think that this will be the year that I have a reflective Advent.

I look forward to Sunday and this new season, Jesus. But all around me are the signs rushing me to Christmas and some kind of celebration that equates spending with love.

I need your help. I want to slow my world down. This year, more than ever, I need Advent, these weeks of reflection and longing for hope in the darkness.

Jesus, this year, help me to have that longing. Help me to feel it in my heart and be aware of the hunger and thirst in my own soul. Deep down, I know there is something missing in my life, but I can't quite reach for it. I can't get what is missing.

I know it is about you, Jesus. You are not missing from my life, but I might be missing the awareness of all of the places you are present there. Be with me, my dear friend. Guide me in these weeks to what you want to show me this Advent. Help me to be vulnerable enough to ask you to lead me to the place of my own weakness, the very place where I will find you the most deeply embedded in my heart, loving me without limits.

Advent 2017 theme

As I child I could not wait for the Sears and JC Penny's Christmas catalog would arrive. I would scan through the toys section to figure out what I wanted to put on my gift list. Which had to be presented to my mom as we sat for thanksgiving meal. As I grow older the list became shorter and yes, the cost of the item sure did go up. So, may I suggest that we think about not just what we want this year and maybe look at what do we need. This year theme is **The Gifts you need.** We will look at Hope, Peace, Joy and Love and might discover we may need these than any item purchased.

Remember that I will be reading a children's book during the weekly advent services. I will share my favorite of them *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski.

Dec 13 – a Blue Christmas service

A quite service of reflection for people who are struggling the “holiday cheer” – a time to grieve and remember.

I want to share this article written by Dr. Molly Marshall- may it be something to think about in this coming new year - **A spiritual performance review**

MOLLY T. MARSHALL | JUNE 13, 2017



It's time for performance reviews in my school. The provost reviews the faculty and academic staff; I review the leadership team and my executive assistant; and other leaders review the work of their teams. We have sent out questions and surveys, all for enhancing institutional effectiveness and individual personal development.

A good performance review should not strike terror in the heart of the one being reviewed — or the reviewer. The most hopeful outcome is that improvement will occur through a careful assessment of accomplishments, priorities and strategic goals that promote the seminary's mission.

As I have deliberated on my approach to these reviews (the board reviews me, too), I have wondered about what kind of spiritual performance review God might administer. We do have

some clues in Scripture, and these beckon our reflection. Certain traits of character and action are pleasing to God, as these biblical forebears demonstrate.

Trusting God. Abraham and Sarah are the venerable forebears whose trust in God is “reckoned as righteousness.” It was not a straight journey to be sure. There was the “sister Sarah” episode in Egypt and the oppression of Hagar as the trust of each flagged. Yet, by faith they conceived and lived into a covenant that charted a future with God, for the sake of all the nations.

Speaking truth to power. For a fellow unsure of his capacity to speak clearly, Moses surely was forthright with Pharaoh about God’s liberating purpose for those enslaved. He demanded that Israelites be set free — and compensated for their labor, to boot. An admixture of impatience and wisdom, this great leader spoke with God as a friend speaks to a friend, sometimes rather bluntly.

Displaying courage. Far from docile or acquiescent, Deborah may be the original Wonder Woman. Judge, prophet and military strategist, she accompanied Barak into battle against Israel’s enemies. Indeed, he said he would not go if she did not; and Deborah “arose as a mother in Israel,” and led her people to victory. Along the way she reminds Barak that he would gain no glory, for God will place the opposing general, Sisera, into the hand of a woman, Jael.

Offering consent to God’s plan. A very young woman says “yes” to God’s invitation to become *Theotokos*, the God-bearer. She does not offer her consent without careful interrogation of the angelic messenger, for she understands some of the public

humiliation this arrangement might provoke. Yet, she believes before she conceives, and generations have called her blessed. She models the truth as spoken by Augustine: “God will not save us without our consent.”

Practicing generosity. We do not know her name, only the size of the offering she brought. The Gospels of Mark and Luke recount how Jesus, while teaching in the temple, observed her sacrificial gift. He told his disciples that “this poor widow has put in more than all those contributing to the treasury.” What pledge form ever requests your “whole living” as the appropriate gift? She gave all she had, Jesus observed.

Serving others. Dorcas, or Tabitha, “was devoted to good works and acts of charity.” She uniquely carries the designation *mathetria* (woman disciple), and her ministry opens the way to the conversion of many. I find the accent on her many good works interesting. Protestants have been quite fearful of compromising the power of grace with any concomitant emphasis on works. Yet, the story of Tabitha makes her concrete labor for others the centerpiece of her life, lost and then restored.

Rightly dividing the word of truth. Pastoral advice for the young leader includes: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved … a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” While pastors have the relentless task of preaching sermons, every Christian has freedom of biblical interpretation, and as Baptists we treasure the liberty of conscience we have to engage texts afresh. In our

time, fresh interpretations that convey inclusion can refresh our congregations.

Discerning the ways of God. The Seer who pens the Apocalypse charts (not as a dispensationalist!) the consummation toward which the long narrative of the Bible points. Not only does he read his current epoch, in all its persecution and violence, with discernment; he also articulates the centrality of Jesus for God's redemptive work for all the ages. John writes what he believes God has given him, and he seeks to be a faithful witness to the ways of God.

Thankfully, God views us through the grace of "being clothed with Christ" and "filled with the Spirit," without dispensing the expectation that we will live as persons being changed from one degree of glory to another. Hopefully, this review of our performance as Christians will encourage our perseverance even as we rely on God's mercy.

CHURCH TIDBITS



December 10 – Christmas Caroling

Join us for some warm and hearty soups before venturing out to sing some Christmas Carols and deliver cards and gifts to some of our shut-ins. Dinner starts at 4:00 and we will leave for caroling around 4:45.

Dec. 13 – a Blue Christmas service – A quite service of reflection for people who are struggling the “holiday cheer” – a time to grieve and remember.

Dec. 17 – Annual Congregational Meeting

If you are a committee chairperson and haven't turned in your annual report, please do so as soon as possible.

Dec. 17 – White Gift Sunday & Choir Cantata

Care Team will be collecting Christmas Cards on Sundays December 3 and December 10 to be delivered to shut ins and residents at Care Facilities during our Christmas Caroling. Please feel free to bring cards for Arlene Vogt-Wagner, Helen Mason, Teddy Fausz, Betty Lou Pfeiffer, and cards for other non-member residents in the facilities who may be there on December 10th! THANK YOU ~ ST. PAUL'S CARE TEAM

To my church family,

Thank you for the cards, emails and phone calls during my recent surgeries and hospital stay. It is a comfort to know we have so many caring people at St. Pauls.

Jim Webb



DECEMBER

Birthdays and Anniversaries

1	Cameron McDonald	7	Fred & Lilla Losey
1	Jessica McDonald		48 years
1	Kayla McDonald	19	Roger & Kathy VonStrohe
4	Susan Voelker		48 years
5	Shawn Hayslette		
8	Gary Sperry		
8	Tom Wheeler		
9	Craig McAlpin		
9	Amanda Pohlman		
9	Sandy Smith		
10	Jennifer Vogt		
12	Josh Nelson		
15	Curtis McNichols		
17	Fay Racke		
21	Wanda Hornsby		
23	Samuel Edington		
24	Benjamin Dietz		
29	Jackie Poynter		



JANUARY

Birthdays and Anniversaries

<p>3 David Buecker</p> <p>5 Margie Stormer</p> <p>6 Kevin Chalk</p> <p>6 Julie Enyart</p> <p>6 Ginny Lickert Combs</p> <p>10 Kenneth Voelker</p> <p>11 Brenda Nelson</p> <p>13 Carol Valerius</p> <p>15 Jackie Baker</p> <p>18 Emma Croxson</p> <p>18 James Santee</p> <p>19 Roger Windgassen</p> <p>22 Ruth Beck</p> <p>22 Todd Pfeiffer</p> <p>22 Roland Wright</p> <p>23 Jim Thomas</p> <p>24 Becky Horn</p> <p>25 Brandon Coplen</p> <p>25 Ava Christine Winstel</p> <p>26 Matthew Losey</p> <p>26 Andrew Saunders</p> <p>28 Annette Boehm</p> <p>29 Zachary Dietz</p> <p>30 Ann Windgassen</p> <p>31 Houston Hall</p>	<p>14 Ken & Fay Racke</p> <p>31 years</p> <p>17 Tim & Linda Velten</p> <p>25 years</p> <p>22 Michael & Amanda Pohlman</p> <p>8 years</p>
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THOSE WHO SERVE IN DECEMBER

Liturgist

Dec. 10 Marion Gosney
17 Karey Thomas
24 Debbie Fowee
5:00 pm – Amity Kukla
31 Roger VonStrohe

Coffee

Dec. 10 D. Yeager & J. Baker
17 Beekee & Shawn H.
24 Tim Ash
31 D. Yeager & J. Baker

Acolyte

Dec. 10 Greyson Ballinger
17 Logan Hayslette
24 10:30 am Greyson Ballinger
5:00 pm Shae Weinel
31 Logan Hayslette

Ushers:

Dec. 10 10:30 Debbie Fowee and Sue Hatfield

Dec. 17 10:30 Rick Carr and Lee Walz

Dec. 24 10:30 Marion & Dorothy Gosney
5:00 Gary Sperry and Ron Sperry

Dec. 31 10:30 Pat Schuchter and Shawn Hayslette

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE YOUR ASSIGNED DATE, PLEASE
TRADE WITH SOMEONE ELSE AND LET THE CHURCH OFFICE
KNOW.

THOSE WHO SERVE IN JANUARY

Liturgist

Jan. 7 Karey Thomas
14 Marion Gosney
21 Debbie Fowee
28 Amity Kukla

Coffee

Jan. 7 Beekee & Shawn H.
14 Tim Ash
21 D. Yeager & J. Baker
28 Tim Ash

Acolyte

Jan. 7 Shae Weinel
14 Greyson Ballinger
21 Shae Weinel
28 Greyson Ballinger

Communion Set-up: Jan. 7 – Mindy Connell and Audrey Thomas

Ushers:

Jan. 7 10:30 Asbury Turner, Jim Miller,
Debbie Fowee and Rick Carr

Jan. 14 10:30 Cameron McDonald and Leah McDonald

Jan. 21 10:30 Marion & Dorothy Gosney

Jan. 28 10:30 Lee Walz and Pat Schuchter

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St. Paul's Work Day with HONK 11/18/2017...Daryl & Teresa joined Ft. Thomas First Presbyterian Church to remove an old furnace and paint. Watch for upcoming opportunities to join us quarterly in 2018!



WHITE GIFT PROGRAM 2017

As most of you know, each year our church provides food and gifts to families for Christmas. Each family receives a letter of the alphabet and a symbol to identify them. These symbols are displayed on a front pew with the identifying letter, age, sex, sizes (when available), and toy suggestions on them. The symbols are to be attached to the bottom of the gift you purchase so that they may be removed by the family when they receive them and place their own bows, etc. on the gifts. Symbols will be available before and after church on November 26th, December 3rd, and December 10th. If you need more symbols, please make your own in the same color and with the same information on them. After you select your symbols, PLEASE SIGN the notebook available showing which symbols you have selected. On December 17th bring your gifts for White Gift Sunday.

On December 21st at 9 am boxes of food and gifts will be assembled in the fellowship hall. We always need plenty of elves to accomplish this task. Contact Mindy Connell to help assemble the food boxes and Charlene Rogers to help check off gifts and sometimes wrap additional gifts.

God bless each of you for your part in this wonderful program. The families are so appreciative every year for all that we are able to provide for them.

Charlene Rogers and the Mission Committee



Thank you for supporting our “Mask Odor” collection during October! Thanks to your generosity we were able to send several boxes of products to the Fuel NKU campus pantry, helping disadvantaged students with much-needed supplies.
~ Mission Committee

But Whom Do You Say That I AM?

E T A C O V D A E W H
R U R E T S A M F O G
A V R S U S E J L N O
W R E T M W A Y I C L
V I N Y D A A K D D O
R A T S G N I N R O M

D A Y S T A R C P T S A L D N A T S R I F O R E R U N N E R
E V G F N O P H H O T U J G R O L E S N U O C H C N A R B O
N M P E I A G O N O F U O R H A D U J F O N O I L I F E I T
E E M V M I M O S R S F K H O R N O F S A L V A T I O N S A
R S A A H O F F E T K E E N D O G Y T H G I M L A M E N H I
A S S Q N G D D O I L A N I N O S N E T T O G E B Y L N O D
Z I T J O U N N N D E C A E P F O E C N I R P H Y P L P E
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N H R Z W H S L Q A R S D P O C J T L A M B O F G O D B V F

R H O R A T O U C I R
P H P O C S N D E G E
E L R L D R S G R H D
N D O F A E O E R T E
T R P O I N L V U H E
E E H D D R A E S B M
R V E R E O T R E S E
E O T O L C I L R H R
V S N L I K O A V E T
I S G R V V N S A P S
G A D A E R B T N H I
W P S D R V S I T E R
A G S G E V O N O R H
L O W O R D H G S D C
N O I T A D N U O F Y

Advocate	Door	Lawgiver	Redeemer
Almighty	Emmanuel	Life	Resurrection
Alpha and Omega	Everlasting	Light	Rock
Amen	Faithful and True	Lion of Judah	Savior
Apostle	First and Last	Lord	Servant
Beloved Son	Forerunner	Lord of Lords	Shepherd
Bishop	Foundation	Master	Son of David
Branch	Governor	Master	Son of God
Bread	Head	Mediator	Son of Man
Captain	High Priest	Messiah	Vine
Carpenter	Holy and Just One	Mighty God	Way
Chosen	Horn of Salvation	Morning Star	Wonderful
Christ	I AM	Nazarene	Word
Consolation	Jesus	Only Begotten Son	
Cornerstone	Judge	Passover	
Counselor	King	Priest	
Day Star	King of Kings	Prince of Peace	
Deliverer	Lamb of God	Prophet	

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